

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously presented) A method of using a guidewire with a rapid exchange-type catheter having a guidewire channel and a slot in a wall along a length of the guidewire channel, comprising:

(a) loading a guidewire into the guidewire channel of the rapid exchange-type catheter;

(b) engaging a proximal end of the guidewire with a guidewire exit tool, the guidewire exit tool including:

(i) a handle;

(ii) a pin secured to the handle, the pin having a forward facing surface that is solid in the center and tapered; and

(iii) a web that secures the pin to the handle, the web being positioned laterally with respect to the long axis of the pin, the web having a forward facing surface that is substantially blunt to prevent cutting the catheter; and

(c) wherein the guidewire exit tool is positioned so that the pin is in the guidewire channel and the web extends through the slot and the tapered forward facing surface of the pin faces the slot to lift the guidewire out of the guidewire channel through the slot.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein the proximal end of the guidewire engages with the guidewire exit tool by sliding the guidewire exit tool in the guidewire channel.

11. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 8, wherein the proximal end of the guidewire engages with the guidewire exit tool by sliding the guidewire against the guidewire exit tool.

12-14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) A method of using a guidewire with a rapid exchange-type catheter having a guidewire channel and a slot in a wall along a length of the guidewire channel, comprising:

(a) loading a guidewire into the guidewire channel of the rapid exchange-type catheter;

(b) engaging a proximal end of the guidewire with a guidewire exit tool, the guidewire exit tool including:

(i) a pin that is generally circular and has a tapered distal end, wherein the tapered distal end is solid in the center;

(ii) a handle; and

(iii) a web that secures the pin to the handle, the web being attached to the pin laterally with respect to the long axis of the pin; and

(c) wherein the guidewire exit tool is positioned so that the pin is in the guidewire channel and the web extends through the slot and the tapered distal end of the pin faces the slot at an angle to lift the guidewire out of the guidewire channel through the slot.